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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1868
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1855
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1792
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1885
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 1849
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1746
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1892
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1549
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1565
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1363
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1836
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS 1120
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0471

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUSHANBE 002020

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SUBJECT: TAJIK POLITICAL PARTIES FEAR SITUATION WILL DETERIORATE
AFTER ELECTION

REF: DUSHANBE 1998 AND PREVIOUS

CLASSIFIED BY: Tracey Ann Jacobson, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy
Dushanbe, STATE.

REASON: 1.4 (b)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: With the Tajik presidential election a foregone conclusion, Tajik political parties try to plan for after the election, but from their perspective, the future looks bleak. Political party leaders predict that the government will clamp down on political activity. Some are running out of fresh ideas to challenge the government and have become desperate for a change in power. President Rahmonov's camp continues to get support from pocket parties and anticipates receiving a favorable report from the Commonwealth of Independent States observation mission. END SUMMARY.

POST-ELECTION FEARS

¶2. (SBU) All political parties will observe the November 6 presidential election, in an official or unofficial capacity. Although the Socialist Party of Tajikistan, the Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Party have boycotted the election, party members will observe within the vicinity of polling stations to note the number of voters and any egregious violations. None of the parties feared harassment by local security forces the day of the election. All parties will issue statements or hold press conferences after the election to publicize their grievances shortly after the election.

¶3. (C) In conversations with PolOff November 1-2, Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, Socialist Party of Tajikistan, Democratic Party of Tajikistan and Social Democratic Party (SDPT) of Tajikistan leaders all told PolOff that relations between the government and political parties perceived as

"opposition" will deteriorate. Narziev, chairman of the unregistered Socialist Party said the government will take "revenge" on all political parties and even imprison some leaders.

¶4. (C) The SDPT fears that the government will try to instigate a split in the party like they have with the SPT and DPT. The party has already instructed its members who work for local governments to disassociate themselves with the SDPT, out of fear that they may lose their jobs for being an SDPT member.

¶5. (C) Islamic Renaissance Party worries primarily about the draft Law on Religion that circulated in June to criticism from religious communities of all faiths. If the government passes this law without revising it to meet international standards, it would greatly restrict freedom of religion in Tajikistan and essentially render the IRPT illegal. The IRPT's Head of Administration, Qosiddinov said the party cannot be silent if the law is passed, but he did not elaborate on what action the IRPT would hypothetically take.

¶6. (C) The president's party, the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT) expects 2.5 million voters, include labor migrants abroad, to turn out to vote. The head of the PDPT's Administration predicts Rahmonov will win by no less than 80%. He acknowledged that other candidates will pick up some votes, but criticized their platforms as fantastical and unrealistic, whereas Rahmonov's platform is chock-full of real promises that can be fulfilled in the next ten years, such developing hydropower stations.

THE FLOWER REVOLUTION?

¶7. (C) In a meeting with the unregistered Socialist Party of
DUSHANBE 00002020 002 OF 002

Tajikistan, chairman Mirhuseyn Narziev discretely told PolOff he has the means to foment a revolution in Tajikistan to overthrow the president, similar to color revolutions in other former-Soviet Union countries. He would call his revolution something along the lines of the "Flower Revolution." He whispered, fearful of Ministry of Security microphones, that he has been discussing plans to start a revolution with members of the Popular Front and former communist party members. He lamented that the group has no financial support. (Comment: Although Narziev may actually have had discussions with others opposed to the government on how to usurp power, it is highly unlikely he has any actual resources, concrete plans, or popular support to start a revolution. End Comment.)

¶8. (SBU) Narziev has been battling the Tajik court system, trying to disqualify the registered Socialist Party's candidate for president by declaring the nomination was illegal. The Supreme Court rejected Narziev's appeal. He will try to appeal again, but plans on asking international organizations to step in the dispute.

ON A "POSITIVE" NOTE...

¶9. (SBU) But all is not dim if you are a government-backed pocket party. The registered wing of the Socialist Party of Tajikistan's chairman said that he has already seen improvements in this year's election from previous years. As a candidate on the campaign trail, he noticed that all candidates were afforded equal time to meet constituents. He also pointed out that President Rahmonov has told local officials not to interfere in the election process and he believes officials will follow such orders.

¶10. (U) Deputy Head of the Commonwealth of Independent States observation mission, Evgeny Sloboda confirmed to PolOff media reports citing that the CIS mission has not found significant election violations thus far but noted there are some minor technical issues. For example, some signatures which presidential nominees collected did not list the birthdate of the person; and candidates' campaign posters were not placed in

alphabetical order.

¶11. (SBU) When asked about the differing reports from the CIS and OSCE/ODIHR missions Sloboda commented that he respects the OSCE/ODIHR mission and has even incorporated some of their methodology into the CIS observation mission. He said the CIS mission once suggested to the OSCE/ODIHR that the two sides combine forces and issue one report, but the OSCE/ODIHR refused the idea. Under a gentlemen's agreement, the CIS and OSCE/ODIHR would never publicly criticize each other's reports. However, in private Sloboda criticized the OSCE's report repeatedly saying that the CIS report does not "dramatize" the situation. He is certain that this election will be an improvement over past elections.

¶11. (C) COMMENT: Many among the opposition believe Rahmonov will use "election mandate" to continue to eradicate political parties that have been a thorn in his side. With a new term and no election in sight for another seven years, there is nothing to stop him from passing controversial laws that restrict civil rights and basic freedoms. END COMMENT.
JACOBSON